SOUTHERN FARM NOTES.

TOPICS OF INTEREST TO THE PLANTER STOCKMAN AND TRUCK GROWER.

Sorghum For Hay.

W. D. C., Portland, Tenn., writes: "Please give us some notes on sorghum hay. I regard it as the poor farmer's friend. It can be successfully raised where red top, timothy and clover hay cannot be grown."

Answer: I agree with you that sorghum hay can be grown where red top, timothy and clover hay cannot be grown. However, I have possibly not made myself clear to you and your brothers farmers, for the term hay in its strictest sense applies to forage made from tame grasses. While sorghum makes a hay of excellent quality, it would not be regarded in the same light as a tame grass hay, being coarser, and of a different character and composition, generally speaking. Timothy hay, as you know, rightly or wrongly, is taken as the standard of hay the world over, and in many of the articles I have written I have had in mind the production of hay of a fine, soft quality, from tame grasses. I do not intend to overlook or ignore the virtues of sorghum hay which I fully appreciate, having had a good deal of experience with it, and I desire to say that it is a great misfortune that it is not more generally cultivated in the South on lands where no hay is now grown. If they were largely utilized, it would solve many of the difficulties of the poor farmer, providing a large amount of forage throughout the winter season, enabling him to keep his stock in good condition, and thus enlarge that very important factor on every farm, the manure heap.

While it is said that sorghum is hard on the land, it will of course grow where many of the tame grasses will not grow at all, and it is not harder on the land in proportion than other crops. Sorghum is a strong, vigorous growing plant, and hence makes a heavy draft on the soil, but in proportion to its yield, does not injure the land more than the tame grasses. It will no doubt exhaust the land sooner than the tame grasses because of the larger yields obtained, and its more vigorous character of growth. Farmers who cannot grow the tame grasses or who find themselves financially unable to purchase seed in considerable quantities, can certainly resort to the use of sorghum with success, so there is no reason why they should not have an abundance of hay of excellent quality under any circumstances. If they only more generally recognize this fact it would be an excellent thing for the agriculture of the South.—Andrew M. Soule, in Knoxville Tribune.

Growing Orchard Grass.

I have been sowing orchard grass seed for a number of years, both for seed and pasture; also sow it in very poor orchards, mixing in with it clover and like it better than any other grass for poor orchards. For seed especially, I should think three-fourths of a bushel per acre sufficient seed, as orchard grass grows in bunches or stools, and when not crowded these stools throw up great bunches of stalks with large heads of seed. For pasture or rolling land inclined to wash I sow 1 to 1½ bushels per acre. I think orchard grass is the hardiest, the easiest to live and one of the best grasses we have. I sow it with oats and clover in the spring and have never failed to get a good stand. I sow the oats and cultivate them in well, getting the ground well fined and level, then sow the orchard grass seed and harrow in well before a rain. I have never practiced rolling the ground just after sowing the seed, but generally roll the orchard grass land after the second year, early in the spring while the ground is damp, as the bunches of grass open up considerably during the winter. Orchard grass does not produce a crop of seed the first year, and by sowing it with clover a crop of hay can be harvested the first year. The ground improved and I believe in a better condition to produce a better crop of seed the next year, than without the clover; however, there is some objection to the clover on account of making it harder to clean the seed properly. I think this objection now is overcome by better machinery for cleaning orchard grass seed.

The seed can be sown on wheat in the fall or any time in the winter or spring with good results. Good land should yield from ten to twenty bushels per acre. I have known as much as thirty bushels per acre being made, but this yield is rare.—Thomas L. Button, in Farmers' Home Journal.

Hogging Down Cowpeas.

If one were to obtain a perfect stand of peas on a field sown broadcast it is not likely that the benefit to the soil would be any greater than if the peas were drilled in. The benefit derived by the soil depends on several things. First, if a good stand is obtained, the soil is shaded all the summer and kept moist and damp, then if the peas form roots freely they extract a considerable amount of nitrogen from the atmosphere. A small part of this is stored in the roots, and so even if the hay is cut off, the amount of available nitrogen in the soil is considerably increased. A large per cent. of the nitrogen in the pea crop is in the leaves, though of course a certain per cent. is transferred to the peas as the crop matures, and if the peas are cut for forage or if they are pastured off by any kind of live stock and the roots turned under and a crop put on so as to keep the land covered during the winter, a large amount of nitrogen can be stored in the soil at practically no cost, for the benefit of the succeeding crop. Hogging off peas is an excellent practice and should be followed more extensively.

The writer prefers to sow peas in drills as a rule. This may be done by stopping up two out of every three tubes in the ordinary grain drill. The peas should be sown at about the rate of a bushel per acre, and if the method suggested is followed, the drills will be about twenty-four inches apart. As soon as the peas come up run over the land with a weeder; this may be kept up for two or three cultivations a week or ten days apart, provided the weeder is run parallel with the rows. The leaves will be torn somewhat, but the injury does not amount to much, and one can cover the land very rapidly and cheaply in this manner. The advantages of drilling the peas are as follows: First, one is almost certain to obtain a uniform stand, weeds can be kept in check and moisture retained in the soil, the peas will make a more uniform growth and should pod more evenly, and they can also be cut and handled for hay to greater advantage than when sown broadcast. There is also a decided saving in seed which is a matter of considerable importance owing to the high price of peas.—Prof. Soule.

Most Profitable Fowls

For the cost and trouble required in raising them, guineas are among the most profitable fowls which can be raised on the farm. They prefer to seek their own food in the meadows and fields, and so long as they can find plenty themselves they will not come to get it. In this way they eat up a great number of worms and grubs and keep down bugs and beetles to a great extent. A good flock of the fowls needs a large range, and every farm of any size should be blessed with a few at least. It is not profitable to attempt to raise them on small ranges, for they will not thrive when cooped up the same as other barnyard fowls. A flock of about twenty will range over a farm of fifty to 100 acres, and by their persistence will help to keep down all the bugs and insects. They will do more. They will help to keep down many noxious weeds and wild plant. The guineas are also the most trustworthy watch-dogs. If taught to roost in the hennery, or close to it they will give the loudest alarms as soon as an enemy approaches. Dogs, foxes and human beings alike attract their attention, and they keep up the shrill cries until the enemy has left the place. A great many poultrymen try to keep a few guineas in their flocks simply for this one purpose of giving the alarm when chicken thieves come around.

More Diversification.

The lesson which the Louisville Courier-Journal reads from the present state of affairs is "more diversification of crops, with the raising of cotton as a part only of the farming system and as a cash crop, and corn, small grains and grasses for rotation and home consumption for man and beast, except as a surplus. The construction of the isthmian canal will call for a great increase of all food products of the farm, garden and orchard, and the proximity of the South will give it an advantage over more northern belts, by which it should be prepared to profit."

Sure Sign of Debility

One of the surest signs of debility in trees is the growths from the trunk and main branches and the dying off, year by year, of the twiggy terminal shoots. The sap does not circulate freely to the extremities, but chiefly about the trunk and main branches, putting out a feeble growth on these parts, which grow stronger the nearer they approach the roots.—Southern Fruit Grower.

High Ground For Peaches.

It is best on general principles to select high ground for an orchard, especially peaches. A northern site gives a colder and later soil and thus retards the blossoming until a later period, reducing the danger from late spring frosts, and avoiding the bad effects of the sun's rays on trees in bloom if they happen to be covered by frost.—Southern Fruit Grower.

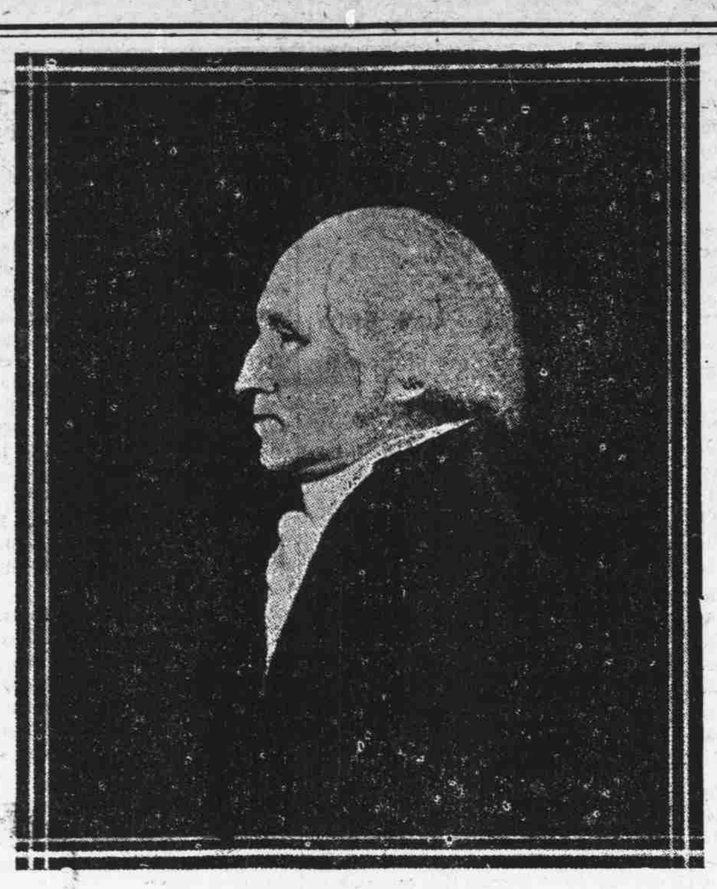
Sharps and Flats.

The value of goods imported by Bulgaria during the first half of 1904 was $11,580,000, exceeding by $3,763,500 the value of the imports for the same period of 1903. The exports were valued at $12,931,000, an increase of $3,860,000 over the value of the exports in the corresponding period of 1903. The principal articles of import showing an increase, are machinery and instruments, the imports of which were worth $1,479,731 more than in 1903.

Live Items of News.

President Roosevelt made a visit to "Little Hungary," in the East Side of New York City, where he made an address before the Hungarian Republican Club. His visit, it is said, was the first ever made by a President of the United States to that section of the city.

Cardinal Gibbons today will attend the ceremonies of conferring the pallium upon Archbishop Moeller at Cincinnati.



THE LAST PORTRAIT OF GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Painted in 1797 by Dr. Elisha Cullen Dick After the Original Painting, Owned by Judge James Alfred Pearce.

BELVOIR ON THE POTOMAC

WHERE WASHINGTON SPENT THE HAPPIEST DAYS OF HIS YOUTH

HOW may one better appeal for interest in this long-deserted and half-forgotten Virginia home, situated some four miles below Mount Vernon on a noble bluff overhanging the Potomac River, and now overgrown by forest trees and tangled wild vines, than by quoting the words of Washington himself concerning it: "The happiest moments of my life had been spent there."

The happiest moments of that brilliant, crowded, epoch-making life!

In the flush of his glory after the Revolutionary War, while the great leader was tasting to the full the cup of earthly success in his modest retirement at Mount Vernon, we find him going off for a solitary ride to Belvoir, through the bowery stretch of woodland between the two estates, a road so often and so eagerly traversed in his boyhood in search of the kind friends and cheery comrades who made Belvoir his favorite resort.

WASHINGTON'S LETTER.

Upon his return to Mount Vernon, full of the emotions inspired by the lonely expedition to this forsaken haunt of former joys, he sat down to pen a letter to the absent owner of Belvoir, and in so doing allowed himself an unusual burst of sentiment.

"Alas! Belvoir is no more! I took a ride there to visit the ruins, and ruins indeed they are. The dwelling house and the two brick buildings that underwent the ravages of fire are very much injured. When I viewed them, when I considered that the happiest moments of my life had been spent there, when I could not trace a room in the house, now all rubbish, that did not bring to my mind the recollection of pleasing scenes, I was obliged to fly from them, and came home with painful sensations and sorrowing for the contrast."

One can readily imagine the effect of this letter upon the proprietors of the place, long resident in England.

"Your pathetic description of the ruins of Belvoir," writes Washington's correspondent, in return, "produced many tears and sighs from the former mistress of it."

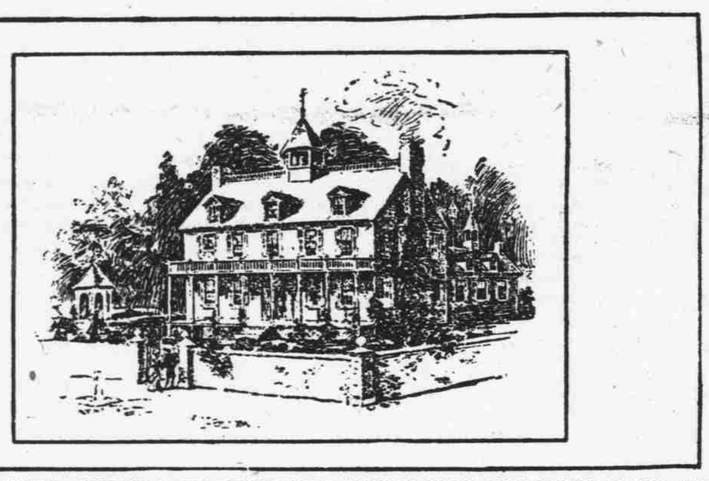
GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX.

Neither master nor mistress of Belvoir House ever returned to live there, and the consciousness of the neighborhood of this wreck of happier days long continued to weigh upon Washington's sprits.

In December, 1796, ten years later, he writes to his friend, Sir John Sinclair, who has been proposing to settle in Virginia, as follows:

"Within full view of Mount Vernon, separated therefrom by water only, is one of the most beautiful seats on the river for sale, but of greater magnitude than you seem to have contemplated. It is called Belvoir, and belonged to George William Fairfax, who, were he now living, would be Baron of Cameron. . . . There are near 2000 acres of land belonging to the tract, surrounded in a manner by water. . . . The mansion house stood upon high, commanding ground."

It does not appear that Sir John Sinclair ever made overture toward possessing Belvoir; but it is easy to sympathize with Washington in his desire to have the dear old house—originally after the early colonial model, broad, spacious, and fitted up with more of English elegance and comfort than were common in the neighborhood—



BELVOIR, WHERE WASHINGTON SPENT THE HAPPIEST DAYS OF HIS YOUTH.

rebuilt and reoccupied; to see lights again flashing from the hilltop across Dogue Run, to ride over and find grooms in readiness to stable horses, good cheer on the tables, big fires of Virginia hickory burning upon the hearthstones; to find, above all, something that might have semblance of the old, kindly welcome awaiting guests, who never in vain had levied tax upon Belvoir's hospitality.

But it was not to be. From Washington's day to this no dwelling has stood upon the site of Belvir House. Great forest trees have matured and aged and fallen, and new ones sprung in their places, above the depressions in the earth, where in recent years some of the ancient bricks of the old dwelling and an iron fire-back bearing the family coat of arms have been found upturned, and the boundaries of the wall are still discernible.

The White Lodge, a sort of fishing headquarters, built on the shore, was deemed sufficient for the purposes of the various members of the family who occupied the place periodically in subsequent years. Truth to tell, although perfectly healthy during a large part of the year, the lowlands round Belvoir have never been entirely free from reproach as to the scourge of chills and fever, so calmly accepted with our ancestors along with their heritage of Virginia acres.

The old diaries and letters handed down in many families record, quite regularly and unemotionally, days and weeks given over to intermittent shaking of aristocratic bones and dosing with abominable drafts intended to counteract malarial influence.

At Belvoir it was the custom of its owners and occupants to retire at certain seasons into log cabins built inland, away from the danger line along the river shore, and there remain in a sort of luxurious camp life.

When autumn clad the hills with radiant dyes, and after a light touch of frost had gleamed upon field and upland, the family and its numerous dependencies came back into winter quarters on the river's edge.

It was a glorious neighborhood for hunting, and every rod of the ground has known the hard runs across country of the famous band of fox-hunters headed by tough old Lord Fairfax of Greenway Court, and including always the men of Mount Vernon and Belvoir.

And now for some of the causes which led Washington to take such reminiscent delight in his early association with the place.

The first owner and founder of Belvoir was William Fairfax, a Yorkshireman, cadet of the house of fighting Fairfaxes. He had been in Queen Anne's service in Spain when only a midshipman of fourteen, and after a long career of adventure and military service for the English crown by land and sea, came to Virginia as collecter of the King's customs, and agent of the immense estates of his first cousin, the sixth Lord Fairfax of Greenway Court. He finally become President of the Virginia Council, was for that reason called "Colonel," and ended his honored life on the Virginia hillside where he now lies.

THE SCHOOLBOY GEORGE.

It was to the household of this accomplished and kindly gentleman—a large family of young people destined in various ways to come into contact with Washington's life—that the schoolboy George, not so very long graduated from the teachings of the sexton, Hobby, but more recently a pupil of Mr. William's school at Wakefield, was introduced by his brother Laurence, whom he had come to visit at Mount Vernon.

Now such a "visit" might last three days, three weeks, or if sufficiently enjoyable, three months, without unduly stretching the welcome of one's host.

George's brother Laurence had married Colonel Fairfax's charming daughter Anne, who made things most agreeable at Mount Vernon. There was a perpetual exchange of dinings and tea-drinkings between Mount Vernon and Belvoir. At stated intervals all the gentlemen of the county met at one place or the other for a fox-hunt breakfast.

The Colonel, Laurence's father-in-law, took an immense fancy to young George, whom he early began to entertain and instruct in the art of war by recitals of his own adventures. And last—perhaps not least—there were always some nice girls stopping at Belvoir!

What wonder that George's visit to Laurence and Anne extended itself indefinitely? That Mount Vernon and Belvoir both became to him new homes?

We may safely picture him about this time of life as shy, awkward, somewhat gawky indeed, presenting few suggestions of the "imperial man"—as Lowell calls him—he afterward became.

His clothes were homespun, and no doubt he carried in the pocket of his country-made suit that historic penknife one may see in the Masonic Lodge of Alexandria a lesson to all boys who lose their knives. It was presented to him by his mother when he was twelve years old, and was constantly carried for fifty-six years. What stories that penknife might have recorded if it had only been born a pen!

THE TWO FRIENDS.

When old Lord Fairfax of Greenway Court gave Washington, at sixteen, his first chance to earn money by surveying my lord's lands in the pathless wilderness of what is now West Virginia, George Fairfax offered to accompany his friend.

Together they rode through "Ashly's Gap" in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and roamed and camped for weeks in happy fellowship, a description of which adventure may be read in full in Irving's life of Washington.

When George William Fairfax went over to England, at a later date, to take possession of the Yorkshire property then coming to him, some of the incidents of his life in the mother country certainly justify the suggestion that Thackery's fortunate youth, Harry Warrington, in "The Virginians," was drawn from him.

He was, by that time, married to a certain beautiful Miss Sally Cary, with whom rumor in the colony said George Washington also had been in love. The couple had invited Washington to join them for a visit to Fairfax's new inheritance, Towlston Manor, in Yorkshire, and were much disappointed when Washington wrote out to them:

"My indulging myself in a trip to England depends upon so many contingencies, which in all probability may never occur, that I dare not even think of such a gratification." A comfort, perhaps, to some stay-at-homes of the present day, although their reward for labor in the home field may not prove quite so wonderful as that of the most illustrious of all Americans.

The two Georges in their youth did not spend all their days in sport and travel. Side by side they went into the political contests of the country.

Perhaps the most interesting phase of the friendship of the two Georges was that during the oncoming of the Revolutionary War, while Washington was slowly but surely taking his place as one of the guiding spirits of the movement toward disruption from the mother country, and George Fairfax was as steadfastly holding to his conviction that such a movement was wrong and mischievous.

In spite of this burning difference, their relations did not alter. They discussed the question personally and by letter, from every standpoint, each listening respectfully to the other's views, and each ending as firm as before in his own opinion.

FROM PATRIOT TO TORY.

It was to George Fairfax that Washington finally gave utterance to that noble cry of feeling about the coming conflict:

"Unhappy it is to reflect that a brother's sword has been sheathed in a brother's breast, and that the once happy and peaceful plains of America are to be either drenched with blood or inhabited by slaves. Sad alternative! But can a virtuous man hesitate in his choice?"

George Fairfax sailed finally for England, passing the famous "tea ships" coming into Boston Harbor, and in England the conscientious Tory thereafter lived and died.

During his absence at this time Washington charged himself with the care of Belvoir, and the various affairs relating to his friend's Virginia estate. Fairfax's death was a blow to him.

Another link of remembrance binding Washington to Belvoir was that there began, as has been said, his first acquaintance with the interesting old lord of Greenway Court.

This old nobleman had come out to live in the Virginia wilderness in the prime of his manhood, and abandoning his beautiful home of Leeds Castle in Kent, England, and other estates, contented himself with ruling over a principality of land inhabited chiefly by a few backwoodsmen, a few scattered families, many prowling and bloody-minded Indians and vast abundance of big game.

His lodge at Greenway Court, not far from the present town of Winchester, was an abode of delight to the boy Washington, who was frequently bidden there to stay. In the dining room of the writer of these lines hang two large plates of old Oriental china, part of a set once presented by Washington to Lord Fairfax on his arrival at Greenway Court for one of these many visits.

From Lord Fairfax he received color and influence in many matters relating to literature, culture and the science of diplomacy in foreign courts. In a thousand ways their sympathies touched and through all the talks, when Washington stood fast for the colonies, Lord Fairfax for the crown, they kept their friendship intact.

Most schoolboys know the touching story of how news of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis came to the old baron, as he sat by the chimney corner in his great lodge brooding over the trend of public events. When convinced that America was forever free from England's rule, and, worse than all, that it was the lad he had helped to train to whom the British commander at Yorktown had surrendered an army, he at first said nothing. After a while he turned to black Joe, his body servant, exclaiming plaintively:

"Take me to my bed, Joe! It is time for me to die."

Belvoir, in the mutability of affairs concerning American estates, has passed out of Fairfax hands. If the old house had endured, like Mount Vernon and Arlington, it might well have served as a shrine for National pilgrimage.—Youth's Companion.